

Let no one rashly conclude that any suspect is not a plague case because the temperature is normal and he has no bubo. A few cases have been recorded of plague appearing in the form of buboes without any constitutional affection. Plague cases vary very much in severity, and some are so mild that it is only by the appearance of a bubo that one can know the patient is attacked by this specific disease. In mild cases the diagnosis can only be made by the discovery of an inflamed and perhaps only slightly enlarged lymphatic gland, and by a bacteriological examination microscopically and by cultivation of the extracted matter from this gland.

It has been many times noted that medical men and other attendants on plague patients occasionally suffer from headache, malaise, anorexia and an inflamed or tender lymphatic gland at times, without being at all further inconvenienced or developing symptoms of plague such as are clinically met with. The case of the sweeper at Parel Hospital is an instance in point, and since then two fresh instances of a similar transient character have come to notice. Here the vital resistance of the healthy organism has been capable of resisting the inroads of the microbe. As in tuberculosis, it is known the microbes are very generally diffused and yet general infection of the whole populace does not follow. So in a plague epidemic it is scarcely possible that the germs are entirely absent from all dwellings in which plague cases do not occur. Free dilution with pure air seems to kill the plague germ readily.

What has been said of fleas and mosquitos will apply to flies and other vermin. Fomites have long been regarded as a source of transmission, and with apparent good reason. The theory that the plague bacillus has a saprophytic existence in the soil may be mentioned as a possibility.

We now come to the consideration of the rat in particular as a means of disseminating the germs of plague. The question often asked by sanitarians is, not whether the rat is concerned in the spread of the disease, but is he the only agency. It has already been shown that the disease may be transmitted in other ways. We have now to make out a case against the rat, and there should be no difficulty in convicting him as principal, the others being accessories. It is admitted that we are unable to state satisfactorily the way in which the germ passes from rat to man. If I should shoot a man in the street in the presence of credible witnesses, I do not think a jury would acquit me because they did not see the bullet enter his body. Competent evidence can be introduced to establish the following facts regarding rats and plague: Rat plague and human plague are identical. The spread of plague follows along the lines of migration of the rat, and not necessarily along the lines of travel of human beings unless rats accompany them, as on board ship. Plague produces a greater mortality among rats than among human beings. Plague almost invariably attacks the rats of a city before it appears in human beings. The first cases of plague in a city nearly always occur in a vicinity where infected rats have been found.

(To be concluded next month.)

DIED.

Dr. Charlotte Blake Brown, the pioneer woman physician of California, died in San Francisco on April 19, at the age of 57. She began the study of medicine with her brother, Dr. Charles Blake of San Francisco, and later completed her course in the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia, returning here to practice. The Children's Hospital was organized by her, and for twenty years she was physician and surgeon there. Many of the local associations to relieve suffering humanity were planned and organized by Dr. Brown, who was the first woman here to practice surgery. She was one of the organizers of the Home for Feeble-Minded Children and the Associated Charities, and was an active worker for the bringing into existence of a State Board of Charities. She proposed the establishment of a training school for nurses, and has always opened the way for women where her own ability placed her in the lead. Dr. Brown was born in Philadelphia. She leaves a husband, Henry Adams Brown, three children, Dr. Adelaide Brown and Dr. Philip King Brown of this city, and Mrs. Harriet Darling of Brookline, Mass.

"LITERATURE."

Dr. Swan of New Haven relates that a professor in one of the larger universities collected the pieces of literature relating to "proprietarys" received during one year, and that they amounted to 424 separate items. Of this number only 54 could be classed as respectable, while the remaining 370 pieces related to remedies more or less secret in preparation, supported by weak journal articles, physicians' testimonials and commendations by the makers. This last class was supported by the testimonials of 1,780 physicians, 56 editors of ten-cent medical journals and 119 professors in mushroom medical schools.—(Bayley, in *N. Y. State Journal of Medicine*.)

PRESCRIBE INTELLIGENTLY.

Clinical experience has ever taught that it is wise to prescribe as few remedies as possible and to use no powerful drug without a distinct idea of what it is intended to do, and that to get the best effects from such a drug it should usually be given by itself. There is good reason to fear that today there is too frequent violation of this rule—due, perhaps, as much to carelessness as to a lack of knowledge.—(Purdy, in *N. Y. State Journal of Medicine*.)

GOOD COURSES AT SUMMER SESSION.

The summer school of the University of California will be in session from June 27th to August 6th, when some courses of interest to the medical profession will be given. Prof. S. A. Arrhenius, University of Stockholm, will give, in English, a course on the application of physical chemistry to serumtherapy, which will include his most recent and unpublished conclusions. Prof. William Ramsay, of London, will deliver a series of lectures on the recent developments in chemistry, illustrated by experiments on the behavior and properties of radium.

Plague case No. 119, bacteriologically confirmed, occurred at Concord, Contra Costa County, February 24. The patient was an Irish-American woman, age 39, and died February 29. The occurrence of the suspected disease was promptly reported, and at once investigated by Dr. B. J. Lloyd, P. H. and M. H. S. Every assistance was given by the attending physician, Dr. Neff, and by the local authorities.

Erratum—On page 122, April JOURNAL, seven lines from bottom of first column, the word "filling" should read "freeing."